

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 029473

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APPROVED BY PM:GSVEST

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TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, EFIN, MASS, IS

SUBJECT: US ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL - SHER/VEST FEBRUARY 7
CONVERSATION

1. ISRAELI EMBASSY ECON MINISTER SHER CALLED ON PM DIRECTOR VEST TO DISCUSS FY 1975 FMS CREDITS AND GOI'S BLUE PAPER REQUEST FOR FY 1976 ASSISTANCE. SHER MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:
2. SHER REQUESTED USG PROVIDE ENTIRE FY 1975 FMS UNDER THE CONTINUING RESOLUTION AUTHORITY. SHER SAID WAITING FOR FINAL APPROPRIATIONS WOULD NOT LEAVE MUCH TIME IN WHICH TO MAKE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS BEFORE END OF JUNE.
3. REGARDING ISRAEL'S BLUE PAPER REQUEST FOR FY 1976 ASSISTANCE, SHER NOTED THAT ACCORDING TO HIS OWN CALCULATIONS THE PRESIDENT'S FY 1976 BUDGET MESSAGE TO CONGRESS ON FEBRUARY 3 CONTAINED ONLY DOLS 300 MILLION IN FMS CREDITS FOR ISRAEL THOUGH NO COUNTRY FIGURES WERE STATED. WHILE THIS AMOUNT DOES NOT RELATE TO ISRAEL'S NEEDS, HE KNEW THAT DECISIONS ON THE BUDGET WERE TAKEN IN DECEMBER AND
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PAGE 02 STATE 029473

EARLIER ASSUMPTIONS ON EMERGENCY SHIPMENTS AND DOD FORE-

CASTS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT SHIPMENTS APPROXIMATE BLUE PAPER ESTIMATES.

4. SHER SAID THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT ANY US ACTION ON GOI'S REQUEST FOR FY 1976 UNTIL AFTER THE SECRETARY'S MIDDLE EAST TRIP AT WHICH TIME HE HOPED THERE WOULD BE SOME INDICATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION.

5. IN REFERENCE TO CANCELLATION OF BREZHNEV VISIT TO CAIRO, SHER SAID THAT PRIOR TO PRESENT STABLE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST HE THOUGHT THAT ISRAEL MIGHT HAVE TO DOUBLE ITS ARMS' ORDERS WHICH ARE PRESENTLY AT MINIMUM (BLUE PAPER) LEVEL. DURING SHER'S RECENT TRIP TO ISRAEL HE HAD ASKED WHETHER, IN VIEW OF THE STABLE SITUATION AND THE LACK OF GOI FINANCES TO PAY FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT, ISRAEL SHOULD SLOW DOWN ITS MILITARY ORDERS. HOWEVER, HE WAS TOLD CATEGORICALLY THAT THERE WAS NO BASIS FOR OPTIMISM OR PESSIMISM (I.E. ANY DEVIATION FROM THE PRESENT LEVEL OF ORDERS).

6. REGARDING ISRAEL'S ABILITY TO ABSORB MILITARY EQUIPMENT, SHER ASSURED VEST THAT ISRAEL COULD ABSORB MORE THAN WHAT IS ACTUALLY BEING ASKED FOR. KISSINGER

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